

Message Text

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12

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EB-07 AGR-05 AID-05 CIAE-00 DODE-00

PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01

SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 COME-00 FRB-03 TRSE-00 XMB-02

OPIC-03 CIEP-01 LAB-04 SIL-01 OMB-01 /089 W

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R 191000Z NOV 75

FM AMEMBASSY DACCA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8799

INFO AMCONSUL CALCUTTA

AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

C O N F I D E N T I A L DACCA 5711

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: EGEN, EAID, BG

SUBJ: AN ECONOMIC FOOTNOTE TO DACCA 5642

1. THE WEAKNESS OF THE PRESENT GOVERNMENT IN BANGLADESH RAISES AS

MANY DOUBTS ABOUT ITS ABILITY TO PROSECUTE ECONOMIC POLICIES AS IT DOES ABOUT OTHER AREAS OF GOVERNMENTAL ACTIVITY. SO FAR AS WE CAN TELL, LITTLE IF ANY DIVERGENCE FROM THE POLICIES OF MOSHTAQUE AHMED IS PLANNED. THE PRESENT GOVERNMENT HAS PRCEEDED ON SCHEDULE WITH THE RICE PROCUREMENT ANNOUNCED ON NOVEMBER 2 BY THE THEN AGRICULTURE MINISTER, ABDUL MOMEN. NUMEROUS ADDITIONAL MODEST BUT LIBERALIZING ECONOMIC STEPS HAVE BEEN TAKEN SINCE NOVEMBER 8. THESE INCLUDE REMOVAL OF DISTRIBUTION CONTROLS ON CEMENT, FURTHER EASING OF SALES OF GOODS BY THE TRADING CORPORATION OF BENGLEDESH, AND MEASURES TO ENNOURAGE THE PRODUCTION AND SALE TO CONSUMERS OF SUGAR. BUT TTHESE MODEST STEPS PROVIDE NO BASIS FOR JUDGING WHETHER THE MARTIAL LAW ADMINISTRATION WILL TAKE THE HARD DECISIONS ON ECONOMIC QUESTIONS OF GREATER HOLITICAL SENSITIVITY.

2. SUCH DECISIONS WOULD INCLUDE SEVERAL URGED ON BANGLADESH BY
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AFEISTANCE DONORS. THEY INCLUDE:

-- INCREASING THE ISSUE PRICE OF RATIONED FOODGRAINS, AN UNDER-
TAKING GIVEN TO THE IMF;
-- ANNOUNCING ITS COMPENSATION POLICY FOR PROPERTIES NATIONALIZED
IN 1972, AN ISSUE IN US-BANGLADESH RELATIONS;
-- INSURING THE FLOW OF AGR-
ICULTURAL INPUTS TO FARMERS; AND
-- ACTING EFFECTIVELY TO CURB POPULATION GROWTH.
ALL OF THESE INVOLVE TOUGH DECISIONS, AND IN LIGHT OF THE SITUATION
DESCRIBED IN DACCA 5642, WE MUST EXPECT FURTHER DELAYS
IN THEIR RESOLUTION.
CHESLAW

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